

## America speaks out (AGAIN) for Net Neutrality!

It's no secret that American citizens are overwhelmingly in favor of Net neutrality. But since I know it's sometimes hard for bureaucrats to notice the obvious swell of public opinion, especially when their partners in industry are busy waving money under their noses and telling them comfortable lies about an issue, I've decided to tell the FCC my personal story.

I grew up during a time when there was no internet. If I wanted to be entertained, the options were watch TV or play a (single-player) video game. If I wrote a story or drew a picture, I had no one to show it to except my friends at school or my immediate family. I knew nothing about foreign countries or cultures, very little about what was going on in the world.

Research was almost impossible. I could look up historical facts and figures in a library, of course, but it took a few hours. Research on breaking news or current events was impossible.

If I wanted to speak my mind about something, my audience was limited to a select few of my peers. If I wanted to question something I'd been told to believe, I had no means of seeking out an impartial source (or at least more diverse selection of biased sources to compare and contrast!)

Virtually all of my information and entertainment came from the Television, and TV has only grown more banal and inspid over the years.

Then, suddenly, the Internet came out, and I was able to freely communicate with virtually anyone, anywhere in the world. I was able to create my own website, publish my own thoughts and opinions, research new ideas as they emerged into the public discourse, and enjoy alternative shows, Flash cartoons, podcasts, and all kinds of new independant media.

For the first time in years, I was using my critical thinking skills, long dormant from years of being told only one way of looking at things. Not only that, but I found I was immersed in a culture of like-minded critical thinkers.

Other users parodied advertisements, questioned politicians, and reported the news literally as it occurred. They did this without the backing of the mainstream media, and it showed. Podcasters talk like a real person. Conversely, television anchormen talked like... well, television anchormen.

Needless to say, I don't watch a lot of TV anymore. Instead I spend a lot of my free time on the internet, reading websites.

Let me repeat that: The internet got me to stop watching TV and start reading more.

And not just reading. Not just watching youtube videos and flash cartoons. Not just looking stuff up, but actively participating. Voicing my opinions. Asking my questions. You can't do that on a TV channel.

And you can't do it on a corporation's privately-funded website, either.

AT&T, Verizon and Comcast are Media Giants. as such, they are inexorably tied to the television industry, the radio industry, the dead tree newspaper industry, and other dinosaurs.

More to the point, if the phone companies are allowed to charge premium fees to provide premium service, only Mainstream Media Giants like NBC, CBS, and FOX will be able to afford premium service. Everyone else will lose their voice.

We do not want the Mainstream Media in charge of the internet. They will stifle creativity, suppress independant thought, and remove the means for free speech which was unexpectedly thrust into the hands of the American public so many years ago.

And without the means to express ourselves freely, without the ability to quickly and easily download content from whichever website we choose to visit, you eliminate our ability to speak freely, and our ability to hear those who are attempting to speak.

Make no mistake. By eliminating Net Neutrality from American law, you are attempting to eliminate Free Speech and Free Expression from American Discourse. Any fool can see that this is the unavoidable end result of turning the phone companies into Gatekeepers. By giving them the unilateral power to decide which companies can reach a wide audience, you are silencing the little guy. You are preventing small website owners and casual visitors to third-party websites from speaking out. But that's not all you're doing.

You're also actively preventing American citizens from choosing what they can read or see. By dictating where Americans can get their news and entertainment, you are essentially helping the Mainstream Media to "pave over" public opinion with whatever propaganda they want Americans to believe.

That's why American citizens are in such an unprecedented uproar over this "Net Neutrality" issue. We don't want the internet censored. We don't want the TV anchorman to report the news to us. We don't want all of our communications dictated by some rich, powerful corporation.

We want to keep talking to each other. Freely, openly, and instantly.

When the internet first came out, Free Speech in America was suddenly freer than it had ever been before. Americans (except for AT&T's, Verizon's and Comcast's lobbyists, of course,) unilaterally support Net Neutrality because we see it for what it is: the source of all that unexpected freedom.

We don't want you to take our freedom of speech away. And we (I.E. America's public, NOT the lobbyists,) are fully aware that removing Net Neutrality provisions from the original Telecommunications Act was the first step down a slippery slope, which will lead to less innovation, less competition, fewer choices and less free speech.

Please bring back Net Neutrality. Please make it a permanent and lasting part of the FCC's telecommunications law again.

Net neutrality unexpectedly created a thriving industry based on the principle of free expression. I think you launched this public inquiry because you are beginning to understand that removing Net Neutrality provisions from the Telecommunications Act was a big mistake. You are starting to understand that the lobbyists are misleading you, and that the American people want Net Neutrality. All I'm asking you to do now, is to do what you know is the right thing. Do what the public demands.

Get us off the Slippery Slope.

Promote Free Speech.

Restore Net Neutrality.